

EXHIBIT 12

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE MIDDLE DISTRICT OF TENNESSEE
NASHVILLE DIVISION

L.W. et al.,)
by and through her parents and next friends,)
Samantha Williams and Brian Williams,)
)
Plaintiffs,)
)
v.)
)
JONATHAN SKRMETTI et al.,)
)
Defendants.)

No. 3:23-cv-00376
JUDGE RICHARDSON

DECLARATION OF HELENA KERSHNER

I, Helena Kershner, declare as follows:

1. I am 24 years old. I have actual knowledge of the following facts and if called upon to testify to them could and would do so competently. I am submitting this Declaration in support of Defendants' Opposition to Plaintiffs' Motion for a Preliminary Injunction and Complaint.

2. I am a detransitioned female from Ohio who would have transitioned as a minor if my mother consented to "gender affirming" medical treatment: giving me testosterone. Thankfully, she did not. Tennessee's law prohibiting minors' medical transitioning is a necessary regulation that will allow kids to grow up and mature before changing their bodies forever.

3. I was conventionally feminine when I was young and had no discomfort with being a girl. However, I was an introvert, and found it difficult to fit in with other girls.

4. My home life was challenging. My mom worked many hours, so my aunt became my main caretaker. After my aunt moved out of the country, I spent more time surrounded by babysitters than family. I struggled with depression and started seeing a therapist.

5. When I was 13, I started using the social media site Tumblr and spent a lot of time online. On Tumblr, I became completely immersed in the "topics" I read about. As a socially struggling teen, this had a big effect on me. When I read about self-harm, I started to self-harm. When I read about eating disorders, I developed an eating disorder.

6. Around the time I turned 14, I found Tumblr's "social justice" communities that harshly stigmatized people who were straight, white, and not transgender. I found myself in an environment where being a cis-white female was the absolute worst form of human, and being trans was normal. I read that if a person did not like their body and if they suspected that they might be trans, they are probably trans.

7. Based on the content I saw and the materials I read, I started to interpret my social, emotional, and body image difficulties as signs of gender dysphoria. I believed that by becoming trans, I could become a desirable, accepted, not evil white cis-person that caused all of the pain of the world. Soon, I began to identify as nonbinary.

8. When I was 15, I started to identify as transgender. I started socially transitioning, changing my pronouns, cutting my hair, and changing my clothing. I received more positivity and encouragement than I had ever experienced. With each change, I received positive affirmation on the internet.

9. By age 17, I identified as a “trans boy” and was fully convinced that my only chance at living a happy life would be to take hormones and undergo surgeries to change my body. I became obsessed with my weight and believed that taking testosterone would transform my body into the ideal I dreamed I could become: thin, tall, sporty, androgynous.

10. My school counselor and therapist both agreed with my beliefs. The psychologist told my mother that I was at risk of suicide if she would not agree to testosterone treatments. Thankfully, my mom did not allow it.

11. I went to a Planned Parenthood clinic in Chicago a few weeks after my 18th birthday and asked for testosterone to medically transition. No clinician asked me what was behind my desperation to change my body. The clinician prescribed me testosterone that day without any blood work or medical evaluation because I seemed “so sure” about my decision. I told the clinicians that I wanted a high dose so I would see more changes in my body. They agreed and prescribed me 100mg of testosterone per week.

12. The mental health effects of testosterone were profound. I began experiencing uncontrollable episodes of rage and paranoia, where I was a danger to myself and others. I self-harmed more and became suicidal. Due to this, I was hospitalized twice. No prescribing ever mentioned these side effects of testosterone. Instead, I was prescribed a litany of psychiatric drugs. This time was so dark that it caused me to question the original promises of a joyful trans life.

13. In February 2018, I stopped taking testosterone and began the journey of detransitioning. My mysterious mental illness went away soon after and has never returned.

14. I am grateful that I spent only a short time on testosterone and am fortunate I haven't experienced any obvious physical injuries. But the impact this experience has had on my life cannot be understated. I became a danger to myself and others under the influence of testosterone. I struggled to process my new reality and face these mental health issues.

15. I am very thankful that my mother did not consent to giving me testosterone as a teenager. If I had transitioned as a minor, I could have spent a lot more time taking it. Because of her decision, I can now have a healthy relationship with my body.

16. Tennessean children are lucky that its legislature has seen these dangers of "gender affirmation" and created a law to allow kids to grow into their natural bodies first before making a life-altering decision.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and corrected.

Executed on May 19, 2023.

/s/ Helena Kershner
Helena Kershner